



Notes of Meeting: East of England

Date of meeting – 25/01/2024

Attendance

Attendance data is published annually on the GOV.UK website.

AB members who sent their apologies for the meeting have, where possible, been consulted on all projects before the meeting. Their views are reflected in the discussion at the meeting (where appropriate). This excludes items where that member declared a conflict of interest.

Regional Director (RD) chair

- Jonathan Duff (RD)

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Tim Coulson (AB)
- Mark Farmer (AB)
- Clare Flintoff (AB)
- Lawrence Chapman (AB)
- Sarah Skinner (AB)
- Josephine Valentine (AB)

Apologies

- Al Kingsley (AB)

Representations received

- One received about the project; 'To discuss sponsor options for Forres Primary School, Hertfordshire.'
- This representation was shared in advance of the meeting with all attendees and considered alongside their corresponding item.

General Discussion Points

- The RD gave some general national and regional updates and invited feedback from the board.
- The board received a presentation about the High Quality Trust Framework and how Regions Group will use it to take decisions about the creation, consolidation and growth of academy trusts.
- The board discussed Ofsted inspections and the RD invited feedback from the board about their experiences of Ofsted inspections.
- The board considered Ofsted judgment outcomes for the previous month.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss Alban Academies Trust (multi-academy trust consisting of seven academies; Ridgeway Academy, Sandringham School, Verulam School, Garden Fields JMI School, Wheatfields Infants' and Nursery School, Skyswood Primary and Nursery School, and Wheatfields Junior Mixed School), Hertfordshire, merging with Atlas Multi-academy Trust (multi-academy trust consisting of three academies; St Albans Girls' School, Beech Hyde Primary and Nursery School, and The Adeyfield Academy) Hertfordshire, to form Alban and Atlas Educational Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that this merger would form a new trust which would be operational from September 2024.
- The board heard about the performances of schools within both trusts and their track record of school improvement.
- The board considered the finances of both trusts.
- The board discussed the governance of the proposed new trust and the composition of its board. The RD asked for more detail about how the board would reduce in size and appoint independent members, if the trusts merge.
- The RD confirmed that he supported the proposal but asked for further clarification from the trusts on the practical process of the merger, particularly regarding the governance of the new trust.

RD decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision. Delivery Officer to speak with the trusts to clarify the governance arrangements for the proposed new multi-academy trust.

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss sponsor options for Andrews Lane Primary School, Hertfordshire.

AB discussion:

- The board considered the track record of school improvement from the two sponsorship proposals submitted, the primary phase capacity of both trusts and the request for additional financial support.
- The board discussed that the sponsor candidate recommended for approval, Generations Multi Academy Trust, would benefit from access to best practice in the sector and that a real-time school improvement plan should be submitted to the RD before the conversion date.

RD decision: Approve with conditions.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school, the trust and LA of the decision. Delivery Officer to seek additional evidence by way of updated school improvement plans, before conversion date, from Generations Multi Academy Trust.

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss sponsor options for Forres Primary School, Hertfordshire.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that this school has received two consecutive 'Requires Improvement' Ofsted judgements.
- The board discussed the business case submitted to sponsor the school and the additional financial support requested.
- The RD deferred a decision on sponsor approval pending submission of a wider field of sponsor candidates.

RD decision: Defer.

Conflicts: Josephine Valentine, CEO Danes Educational Trust – interested party multi academy trust.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision. Project to be brought back to a future Advisory Board.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss Colne Community School and College (The Sigma Trust), Essex, closing its sixth form provision.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that there have been no admissions into the sixth form at the school for the last two years and so there are currently no pupils attending the sixth form.
- The RD raised no concerns about this proposal.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school, the trust and LA of the decision.

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss Ingatestone and Fryerning CofE VA Junior School, Essex, converting and becoming an academy and joining Mid Essex Anglican Academy Trust

Project: To discuss Ingatestone Infant School, Essex, converting and becoming an academy and joining Mid Essex Anglican Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Ingatestone Infant School is a community school and that Ingatestone and Fryerning CofE VA Junior School a faith school.
- The board heard that the trust is local to both schools and has already been providing support to the schools.
- The board heard that the schools work closely together and that they currently share the same headteacher.
- The board discussed the governance arrangements of the school and the trust, and considered the relationship between the CEO of the trust and headteacher of both schools.
- The board discussed the performance of the primary schools within the trust.
- The RD agreed that the addition of these schools to the trust would increase the capacity of the trust, especially regarding SEND.

RD decision:

Approve with conditions the project, 'To discuss Ingatestone and Fryerning CofE VA Junior School, Essex, converting and becoming an academy and joining Mid Essex Anglican Academy Trust'.

Approve with conditions the project, 'To discuss Ingatestone Infant School, Essex, converting and becoming an academy and joining Mid Essex Anglican Academy Trust'.

- Delivery Officer to request an external review of the governance arrangements for these projects.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools and the trust of the decision. Academy Orders to be issued and LA to be informed of the decision.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss King's Park Infant School, Dereham (Unity Education Trust), Norfolk, opening a specialist resource base.

Project: To discuss Magdalen Academy (Unity Education Trust), Norfolk, opening a specialist resource base.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the proposal is to open a specialist resource base at each school; the base at King's Park Infant School would be an 8 place Complex Needs Specialist Recourse Base and the base at Magdalen Academy would be an 8 place Social, Emotional and Mental Health Base.
- The board heard that the specialist resource bases at both these schools would make earlier locally based support available to vulnerable children.
- The board heard that both schools have 'Good' Ofsted judgements.
- The board heard that the trust has experience in delivering specialist provision, and that both specialist resource bases will benefit from the expertise of a local mainstream special school.

- The RD agreed that there is a need for specialist provision in the area and that the opening of these bases would help address that need.

RD decision:

Approve the project, 'To discuss King's Park Infant School, Dereham (Unity Education Trust), Norfolk, opening a specialist resource base'.

Approve the project, 'To discuss Magdalen Academy (Unity Education Trust), Norfolk, opening a specialist resource base'.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, the trust and LA of the decision.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss Hethersett Academy (Inspiration Trust), Norfolk, increasing its capacity by 200 pupils.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that this proposal is to increase the capacity of the school, which involves developing 12 new classrooms and a new three-storey block.
- The board heard that the school currently has an 'Outstanding' Ofsted judgement and has track record of strong academic performance.
- The board heard that this increase in capacity would help to accommodate the growth in housing developments in the local area.
- The RD agreed that this project would help address the local need for school places.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school, the trust and LA of the decision.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss Barnby & North Cove Primary School (Consortium Trust), Suffolk, opening a specialist resource base.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that this proposal is to open a specialist resource base for up to 24 pupils with additional needs in cognition and learning.
- The board heard that the school has a 'Good' Ofsted judgement.
- The board considered the finances of the school.
- The board discussed the growing need for SEND provision in Suffolk and agreed that this project would help ensure there are sufficient SEND places in the area.

- The board heard the trust expanded into delivering specialist provision in 2023, and the RD agreed that the trust has the necessary capacity and capability to open this specialist resource base.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school, the trust and LA of the decision.

Converter Academy Order

To discuss Peakirk-Cum-Glinton CofE Primary School, Peterborough, converting and becoming an academy and joining Peterborough Diocese Education Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board considered the case and provided no specific comments in relation to the proposal.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision. Academy Order to be issued and LA to be informed of the decision.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss creating a cognition and learning SEN unit at Sybil Andrews Academy (Unity Schools Partnership), Suffolk, from September 2024

AB discussion:

- The board heard the proposal is to open a Cognition and Learning SEN unit with a capacity for 18 pupils in KS3 and KS4. This unit would be a new building, which should be ready for use from September 2024.
- The board heard that the school has received a 'Good' Ofsted judgement, and its inclusive ethos was highlighted in the Ofsted report.
- The board considered the increasing need for SEND provision in Suffolk, and the RD agreed that the opening of this unit would help address this need.
- The board noted that the trust has experience in providing high quality inclusive teaching for children with SEND.
- The RD agreed that the trust has the capacity and expertise to run this unit.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Tim Coulson, Chief Executive of Unity Schools Partnership.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school, the trust and LA of the decision.

